

### **Definitions of Exceptional Children Categories**

**Developmental delay**-Within the ages of three through eight and has not acquired skills or achieved commensurate with recognized performance expectations for one's age in one or more of these developmental areas: cognition, communication, motor development, social-emotional, or self-help/adaptive behavior.

**Speech or language impairment**- A communication disorder, including stuttering, impaired articulation, delayed acquisition or absence of language, a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Specific learning disability (LD)**- Not achieving commensurate with age and ability level; has the intellectual ability but there is a substantial discrepancy between achievement and that intellectual ability in one or more of these areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills/comprehension, or mathematics calculation/reasoning; the discrepancy between ability and achievement is not due to a mental disability, visual, hearing or motor impairment, emotional-behavioral disability or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. It includes conditions like dyslexia, developmental loss of the ability to speak and perceptual disabilities.

**Emotional-behavioral disability (EBD)**- A condition characterized by behavioral excess or deficit when compared to peers and cultural reference groups which significantly interferes with a child's interpersonal relationships or learning process to the extent that it adversely affects educational performance; the comparison is across settings, over a long period of time and to a marked degree.

**Orthopedically impaired**- A severe physical impairment that adversely affects educational performance to the extent that specially designed instruction is required; includes an impairment caused by a congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of limb, etc.), a disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, etc.), and from other causes (cerebral palsy, amputations, etc.).

**Other health impaired**- Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that is due to a chronic or acute health problem and adversely affects educational performance to the extent that specially designed instruction is required. Examples of such chronic health problems include heart condition, tuberculosis, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, nephritis, asthma, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Visually impaired (VI)**- A vision loss, which, even with correction, adversely affects educational performance to the extent specially designed instruction is required. The loss is as follows: visual acuity even with prescribed lenses that is 20/70 or worse in the better eye; or visual acuity that is better than 20/70 and the child has one of these conditions- a medically diagnosed progressive loss of vision, a visual field of 20 degrees or worse, a medically diagnosed condition of cortical blindness, or a functional vision loss.

**Hearing impaired (HI)-** A hearing loss that has an adverse affect on educational performance to the extent specially designed instruction is required- whether permanent or fluctuating, ranging from mild to profound (a loss of 25 decibels or greater exists through speech frequencies of 500, 1000, and 2000 Hertz in the better ear), and of a degree that the child is impaired in the processing of linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.

**Mild mental disability (MMD)-** A deficit or delay in intellectual functioning (at least two but no more than three standard deviations below the mean) and adaptive behavior (at least two standard deviations below the mean), which adversely affects overall academic performance to the extent that specially designed instruction is required, and which typically manifests during the developmental period.

**Functional mental disability (FMD)-** A deficit or delay in intellectual functioning (at least three or more standard deviations below the mean) and adaptive behavior (at least three or more standard deviations below the mean), which is typically manifested during the developmental period. A severe deficit exists in overall academic performance and specially designed instruction is required for the child to benefit from education.

**Multiple disabilities-** A combination of two or more disabilities (e.g., mental disability-blindness, mental disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.) resulting in significant learning, developmental, or behavioral and emotional problems, which adversely affect educational performance and cause severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. A child is not considered to have a multiple disability if the adverse effect on performance is solely the result of deaf-blindness or the result of a speech language disability and one other disability.

**Autism-** A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected because the child has an emotional behavioral disability.

**Deaf-blind-** Combined hearing and visual impairments that have an adverse affect on the child's education performance, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with hearing or visual impairments, unless supplementary assistance is provided to address educational needs resulting from the two disabilities. Specially designed instruction is required to address needs of both disabilities.

**Traumatic brain injury (TBI)-** An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, which adversely affects educational performance and causes temporary or permanent and partial or complete loss of cognitive functioning, physical ability or communication or social-behavioral interaction (e.g., memory, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, psychosocial behavior, speech, problem-solving, etc.). The term does not mean a brain injury that is congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

